

LOS ANGELES HERALD - EXAMINER  
24 June 1981

## Who's running this country, anyway?

The intelligence community is going to get itself into deep trouble — again

**E**arlier this week, we ran an absolutely amazing two-part series about some former CIA officials. The work of award-winning investigative reporter Seymour M. Hersh, the series disclosed that several former CIA operatives made a killing in the mid-'70s by selling a fortune in sensitive military technology to one Moammar Khadafy.

Yes, *that* Col. Khadafy. The arch-terrorist. The Libyan dictator and international megalomaniac.

And the former CIA agents were able to wheel and deal for as long as they did because, as Assistant U.S. Attorney General Philip B. Heymann has observed, there's a shocking lack of controls to prevent such freelancing. Here were former operatives, one of whom was discharged from the agency in 1971 for misconduct, selling sophisticated weaponry to a nation believed to be financing such terrorist groups as the Palestine Liberation Army, Italy's Red Brigade, the Irish Republican Army, the Red Army of Japan and Germany's Baader-Meinhof gang.

Now if *that's* not working at cross-purposes with our so-called fight against international terrorism, it'll certainly do until the real thing comes along.

The U.S. government did finally get around to prosecuting the former CIA men and another accomplice on

weapons and conspiracy charges (two were sentenced recently; the third fled the country before trial), but the government learned of the sales way back in 1976. In the meantime, these characters kept funneling the technology to Libya and recruiting former Green Berets and others to help train Khadafy's growing band of goons.

Certainly there were legal obstacles to bringing a quick indictment. But unless and until the intelligence community can come up with a more satisfactory explanation, the public will suspect that weak laws may not have been entirely to blame. Weak wills may also have had something to do with this scandal. Perhaps the various government agencies involved in the investigation moved slowly because they feared embarrassment to the intelligence community, or perhaps current agents were reluctant to go after former colleagues. But our advice to the intelligence community is to demonstrate more vigilance in cracking down on abuses by its operatives, present and former. A lack of that vigilance resulted in crackdowns on the intelligence community in the 1970s, which left it weakened in its effort to protect national interests. That should never happen again — and the intelligence community should make certain it doesn't. ■